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STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

AN AWAKENING CHINA: RABBIT OR TIGER

BY

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ABSTRACT

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TITLE: An Awakening China: Rabbit or Tiger

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE:07 April 1999 PAGES: 44 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

China is in the process of modernizing and expanding across the spectrum of national power (i.e., economic, diplomatic, information and militarily). This awakening is causing concern amongst the nations of the region. Most regional nations see China as the most likely threat to regional stability in the future and certainly will cause a shift in the regional balance of power. How she acts as she emerges will be determined by what she sees. The United States, as the only super power, is seen as the primary country that can influence the environment that surrounds China's metamorphosis. Accordingly, the United States needs to develop strategies that encourage China to emerge as a cooperative nation following the internationally accepted norms that govern actions vice the next evil empire.

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AN AWAKENING CHINA: RABBIT OR TIGER

With America's outward attention focused on the failing Russian economy, the simultaneous fracturing and unification of Europe and the continuing problems of the Middle East and Southwest Asia, American national and theater strategists must resist the temptation to subordinate the deep and dramatic changes occurring in Asia. The Asian-Pacific region is not only vital to United States security today, but will continue to grow in importance as we enter the twenty-first century. Our relations with Japan are critical, but at the heart of this importance, is China.

The real potential danger in Asia in twenty-five to thirty years is an expansionist China. The implications of this for the United States are enormous. Across all elements of national power, economic, political, and military, China's and the United States' national interests are becoming more intertwined. This interrelationship raises serious concerns that if not handled correctly, threaten to conflict with our nation's vital interests and basic objectives.

The thesis of this paper is that China, in her quest to become the dominant power in Asia, is the primary future threat to regional stability in Asia. How the United States shapes the environment around China so that as she awakens she becomes a responsible and cooperative member of the world community and not the next "evil empire" may be the most critical question facing the United States. Her geographic location, flourishing economics and political orientation are a natural source of conflict. The potential for China to become a booming totalitarian

regional hegemon sitting astride key sea lines of communications vital to United States, as well as, global interests, presents an ominous picture. Combined with the United States' implicit and explicit regional security commitments and democratic principles the conditions for future conflict are present. Based on the significance of this emerging great power, the United States must develop policies that ensure China does not awaken as a paranoid, hostile and threatening adversary. It must be understood that China will pose challenges that will require careful management in order to maintain regional stability. Our goal, like that of China's Asian neighbors, then is not to resist change in China but to shape it. Asia and the world view the United States as " the key balancing or stabilizing force in the region" and therefore the primary shaping agent.

China -The Challenge

For most of modern history, Western strategists have wondered when China would awaken from its long self-imposed isolation. Finally, after a period of domination by foreign great powers, she seems to have exploded on a course of economic, diplomatic and military expansion that reverberates across Asia and the world. Tremendous sustained economic growth and development has provided China with the capability to finance her national objectives. China is the only major country in the world whose military is undergoing significant modernization and growing stronger. Her geo-strategic location in the center of Asia astride key sea lines of communications (SLOCs) dictate that she has an interest and role to play in almost every regional issue. Lastly, her enormous population, combined with a

growing nationalist fervor and desire to be the dominant leader in Asia, all suggest that over the next quarter century China will be at the center of the uncertainty that Asia faces.

China is the world's oldest continuous civilization and one of the great emerging powers today.² A comprehension of its past is essential to understand China today and into its future. China has a recorded history of nearly four thousand years, one of the oldest in the world. Over this period of time China has been a unified state, a collection of fragmented kingdoms, a feudal state dominated by others, and finally, for the past fifty years, a socialist state. Simplistically, China's cultural history can be divided into three general periods.³ The legacy of this history has significant impact on the thinking and possible future action of the Chinese.

The first period covers China from the beginning of recorded Chinese history to the late nineteenth century, when the last Chinese dynasty crumbled. This period is personified by the philosophies of Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. They form the keystone to modern Chinese thought, much like Judeo-Christian ethos influences Western thinking. The unassertiveness of these philosophies is characterized by patience, a sense of timelessness, and consensus. But the underlying principle is the concept called xiao⁴, the filial obedience to the authority of the man to his parents. These serene concepts focus around morality, balance in nature, and harmony. Unfortunately, they often run counter to the current revolutionary and inconsistent policies of the communist regime today. It was also

during this period that China enjoyed a cultural hegemonic position in Asia. Even toward the end of this epoch, when China was dominated by foreign powers, she never fully acquiesced to the occupying forces. Based on this, China will always perceive herself as the center of Asia.

The second period covers the years from the mid 19th century to the communist takeover in 1949 and the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Intense nationalism and a national independence movement characterized this period. During this period the short-lived peaceful coexistence between the communist and Kuomingtaing factions was shattered by a civil war that resulted in the Nationalist evacuation to Taiwan and the establishment of the communist Peoples Republic of China. Both claimed they represent the true China.

The third period is the reign of the Chinese communists. This period is characterized by a series of revolutionary but often failed five-year plans that effectively alienated the people from the government. Eventually, the hard-line communist theories of Mao Zedong (and later the gang of four) succumbed to the more pragmatic Deng Xiaoping. Deng eventually gained popular support from the people as he became the "campaigner for the cause of free market economy," and decentralized control. However, accelerated inflation, corruption and social discontent overshadowed the positive results of the initial Deng years. These problems lead to the 1989 Tiananmen Square demonstration and massacre.

Despite the international rancor and political isolation that followed Tiananmen,

despite some resistance from party conservatives (the "left"), has accelerated economic reform, reorganized business ownership concepts, and made government and party leadership changes. Jiang Zemin appears to be opening the door even further for responsible relationships with the rest of the world.

The net result of the constant and dramatic changes that characterize the communist regime has caused most Chinese to question the Communist Party's legitimacy. The Taoist and Confucianist philosophies that permeate four thousands years of Chinese culture are out of sync with the contradictory and ambiguous policies of China today. This uncertainty has resulted in incidents of civil unrest amongst the populace, particularly amongst the farmers and students.⁶

Consequently, the world waits and wonders how China will react to future events. This tremendous uncertainty must be foremost in our strategic planners thinking as they develop strategies to shape the rising Chinese capabilities in the future.

China -The Future 2025 and Beyond

The future direction of China is a long-term concern of the other major Asian nations, the United States. Eventually, most concede China will be a global force to be contended with in the international arena. Perhaps Asia expert Walter Mead says it best when he writes:

"China's influence beyond its borders appears to be growing quickly - A reversal of the steady decline of three centuries. China's massive population, its economic prowess and the collapse over the last 50 years of three of the four powers that once hemmed it in - Britain, Russia, and Japan together with the

decline of the fourth - the United States are creating a radically new situation in the Orient. The world is heading toward the Chinese century and possibly the Chinese millennium."

China is a dynamic and increasingly pragmatic nation, willing to embrace seemingly contradictory policies and philosophies in order to strengthen its wealth and power. A significant multi-prong modernization program⁸ designed to broaden China's sphere of influence complements dramatic free market economic growth and development. This sudden spurt of relative and growing absolute economic and military power irrevocably affects security relations in the region.

China's commercialistic⁹, free-market economic power has made her a force to be recognized. China's 9.7 annual growth rate for 1997¹⁰ is indicative of her sustained near double-digit national annual growth rate over the past decade.

Additionally, the World Bank reported 37 billion dollars (US) of foreign direct investment in China for 1997, a sum more than double the next developing country's rate.¹¹ Already, by some economic measures, (GDP) China possesses the world's second largest economy."¹² Although this may be considered a reach, it does suggest the potential that China might achieve. If the current level of growth continues, relatively soon, China will be rivaling Japan, the emergent European Union and the United States. China is well on her way to realizing her potential as an economic superpower.

In addition to the exponential growth in economic power China is opening the door to political and social interaction. In recent years China has significantly

increased her interest and participation in global issues. Interestingly enough, hosting the recent United Nations conference on women. She has broadened her personnel exchange programs, particularly military to military contacts at both the senior and mid-grade levels, including her defense attaché contingents and recent port visits by United States Navy ships. Finally, China's participation with global and regional multinational associations, including the United Nations and ASEAN, has mushroomed. Despite this overt move to engage in cooperative dialogue China continues to disregard globally accepted norms in many areas including territorial expansion, intellectual property right infringements and technology exchange. Though covered in a veil of cooperation and communications China has emerged as perhaps the most unabashed practitioner of power politics in the post cold war world.¹³

What we in the United States military are most concerned with, and must be most cautious of, is China's drive for military power. For years, China has been viewed as a status quo power and despite her nuclear power status, she rarely deployed troops beyond her borders. But, in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union, China's military power, relative to her neighbors, has dramatically increased. "China now views its East Asian neighborhood in expansionist terms." The People's Liberation Army (PLA), a staunchly conservative organization in an increasingly progressive society, has enjoyed a continued relative increase in defense expenditures since the tragedy of Tiananmen Square. Subsequently, China has embarked on an aggressive program of military modernization and expansion

designed to give her a capability to project power well beyond her shores. She has been taking full advantage of Russia's dire economic problems to buy advanced hardware, modern technology and subject matter experts to build her own warfighting capability. China firmly believes that if she is to take her rightful place as the leader of Asia, she must modernize and expand her armed forces. And she is doing just that!

Specifically, China is focusing on a smaller, better educated, better trained, and better equipped force rather than rely on the Maoist zeal of yesteryear. The Peoples Liberation Army is being streamlined and was reorganized in 1985 into group Armies emphasizing combined arms tactics. Military rank structure was restored in 1988 and officer training programs have been created at the National Defense University. No longer will the Peoples Liberation Army be a large standing force organized to fight a general defensive land war or operate cottage industries. Beijing now wants a military force designed for rapid deployment and intensive response under modern conditions.¹⁵

The PLA Air Force (PLAAF) modernization program includes the purchase of advance multi-role aircraft, air launched cruise missiles and mobile medium-range air defense missile capability.¹⁶ This equipment, which includes SU-27 Flankers, F-8 II (Finback B) and Searchwater and Phalcon AEW radar,¹⁷ has significant offensive and active defensive capabilities, making China's neighbors more than a bit concerned. Despite these advances the Air Force still has difficulties with long-range deployments. Additionally, China is moving production capability for several

of the more modern airplanes into China. Finally, defense reports indicate that China is working on an anti-satellite capability and may already possess the ability to track and image certain satellites. Couple this with the expanding Chinese space program and we see a meaningful improvement in China's military aerospace systems and capability.

Last but not least, is the expansion and modernization of the PLA Navy (PLAN). It is in this area that the most dramatic and unsettling changes are occurring. Accompanying the military expansion, in the closing years of the 1980's, China announced an aggressive shift in her maritime strategy. No longer would she focus on brown water defense but would pursue an active green water defense. This green water strategy is viewed by many as the stepping stone to becoming a blue water power in the next century. As Admiral Lin Zhiye points out: "the threats to our development and security come from the sea. To be more exact, they lie in the areas within the first island chain in the North and South China Seas." Under this new extended offshore defense strategy, the PLA Navy modernization has focused on building a credible force capable of effective deterrence and power projection.

To accomplish this the PLAN is increasing the effectiveness and survivability of both its' existing nuclear and conventional submarine force and building a number of new, large conventional attack submarines. Through a dual track acquisition program China is conducting a comparative analysis with four Kilo-class submarines bought from Russia and two indigenous Type 039 (Song-class) SSNs ²⁰

to form the future underwater component of the triad. The second leg of the PLAN triad is its surface ships. Though already numerically outnumbering regional competitors, the navy continues to modernize and build at the same time address qualitative issues as well. It is adding such things as improved ASW capabilities, anti-missile defense capabilities and surface-to-air missiles to its growing 052 and 053-class destroyer/frigate fleet.²¹ Although it has a long way to go in refining its sustainment capability at sea, specifically underway refueling and fresh water distillation, China has already demonstrated the capability to deploy two fleets simultaneously throughout the region and across the Pacific.²²

Finally, the Naval Air Force (NAF), with more than 800 aircraft, is one of the largest in the world. Despite this fact, it is the weakest link in China's quest to become a blue water power. Although her fleet of aging H-5/H-6 Bombers and her developing H-7 have some operational reach most of her current aircraft lack range or loiter time. China has announced the procurement of several new planes as well as an upgrade to current equipment, including the Zhi 8 and Zhi 9 series of shipbased helicopters, to make it more suitable for future ocean operations.

The biggest potential improvement to the NAF, the greatest concern to the other Asian nations and the capping symbol of the PLAN's intent to become a blue water power is the persistent rumors that China wants to buy an aircraft carrier.

Both Russia and Spain have offered China the opportunity and some reports indicate that China expressed serious interest in buying the <u>Varyag</u>, a Soviet Kuznetsov-class carrier. ²³ Even if the Chinese do not purchase an aircraft carrier

they are slowly developing the capability to build one from the keel up or will be able to convert a pre-existing platform.²⁴ Granted, much work in the areas of training, operating and defending the aircraft carrier must still be done and it is not readily achievable in the near term. Should China back away from the traditional aircraft carrier concept, their development of a forward operating base in any of the contested island chains (i.e., Mischief Reef in the Spratly's or Woody Island in the Paracels') would serve a similar purpose until China develops the capability. Regardless, the procurement of an aircraft carrier or the establishment of a forward operating base by the PLAN would be a major significant intimidating factor and a powerful threat to the regional balance of power.

To complement her developing conventional military power, China has an expanding and modernizing nuclear capability with its Strategic Missile Forces.

Although considered as a second tier nuclear power, China's nuclear arsenal of over 400 weapons would make it the third largest nuclear power today.²⁵ Her seven intercontinental ballistic missiles (Dong Feng –5, 5a) capable of striking the United States, and multiple intermediate range missiles (DF-3, 3a, 4, 21) with ranges that cover the region, present a credible deterrent. Additionally, the Chinese have at least one known nuclear-fueled ballistic missile submarine, the Xia, armed with 12 Julang-1 missiles.²⁶ Although China's nuclear capability and employment policy does not include the mutually assured destruction or first use option deterrent possessed by the United States, it does ensure China will not face unanswerable nuclear threats in the future.²⁷ Those threats are certainly within the

realm of possibility as the balance of power shifts with the recent nuclear test in India and Pakistan, the unification of a nuclear Korea or if a threatened Taiwan or Japan develops a nuclear capability. With a significant nuclear capability in the region it is easy to see the tremendous threat to regional stability developing in Asia.²⁸

As a complement to her traditional military power the Peoples Liberation Army is making serious inroads into information warfare. Clearly the Peoples Liberation Army understands the impact and requirements of information operations in future warfare. The shear volume of writings suggest an understanding of the technical and operational elements of information warfare in order to attack the enemy's decision making systems, apply military deception and conduct operational security, psychological operations and electronic warfare.²⁹ The Chinese Institute of Space Technology has made several world-class technological breakthroughs in high technology research, electronics and giant computers.³⁰ This growth has allowed Beijing to embark on a major effort to develop her capability to paralyze her foe's information and computer systems so as to make them ineffective or inaccurate. The Chinese are also pursuing information dominance by developing a wide range of space and ground based sensors to cue long-range strike assets and provide early warning.31 This information warfare focus is key to China's acknowledged asymmetric strategy as Major General Wang Pufeng writes "using the inferior to overcome the superior is a tradition of China's military."32

China's Published Strategy or Stratagem

Jiang Zemin following in the footsteps of his predecessor Deng Xiaoping has launched China on a substantial modernization program to enhance China's capability across the spectrum of national power. Her goal is to achieve a status of parity in economic, political, and military strength with the world's leading powers. This, China believes, will bring her legitimacy as a great power and the preeminent power in Asia. The arguable question revolves around intent, for it is intent combined with capability that defines the threat.

China, in her second "white paper", China's National Defense,33 published in July 1998, lays out her national security goals and policies for the future. Its opening sentence sets the tone and the strategic place China sees for herself in the future. "Mankind is about to enter the 21st century of its history. It is the aspiration of the Chinese government and people to lead a peaceful, stable and prosperous world into the new century." The white paper further proposes China's new way to safeguard peace through the abandonment of cold war mentalities while encouraging what she calls the "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence."34 While the white paper may sound plausible and encouraging to the reader, China's actions over the last few years have been assertive and aggressive. Recently the world has seen China execute an unparalleled modernization of its military, fight skirmishes over territorial expansion, fire missiles toward Taiwan, abuse intellectual property rights, export destabilizing technologies and clearly define in its white paper that existing regional security alliances are "adding factors of instability" to

the region. This last comment an editorial about the United States and its five regional bi-lateral security agreements³⁵. Certainly these are not actions congruent with her stated position of non-expansionist, peaceful co-existence.

China clearly sees herself at the center of Asia. In order to reach this point China must isolate then marginalize or eliminate the United States as the power broker in Asia. Accordingly, I suggest that China may be developing a strategy by taking a page from Otto Von Bismark, the 19th century Prussian leader who used the elements of national power to isolate the target state then defeat it without rising the ire of other regional powers to intercede.³⁶ This defeat does not connote the traditional thoughts of conventional force against conventional force but the asymmetrical and asynchronous warfare principles prophesized 2500 years ago by the great Chinese philosopher Sun Tzu.³⁷ It is plausible that China's strategy is to attack United States vulnerabilities, by fracturing existing United States bi-lateral security arrangements and focusing attention elsewhere in order to create the conditions where a weaker state can prevail over the stronger state.³⁸

Potential Future Scenarios

What, then, are the long-term China scenarios that demand United States attention? There are many that are capable of transforming the current balance of power situation into a dynamic and dangerous confrontation.

1. The arms proliferation issue and China's proported willingness to sell missile components and technology, despite signing control agreements, to almost anyone who would pay or to further national political objectives could transform

Asia into a quagmire. China's technology transfers to Pakistan and to Iran are obvious attempts to counter-balance India, a potential regional rival, and focus the United States' attention elsewhere respectively.

- 2. Despite signing cooperative agreements with Russia and several other bordering nations recently, this resource-rich area, particularly oil, could provide a tempting target for the already oil importing, resource hungry, Chinese economy.
- 3. India, an emerging regional competitor, and her growth will inevitably encounter China. As China's naval power projection capability grows, it will undoubtedly meet "head-on" with the substantial and growing Indian Navy.
- 4. Japan, no discussion of China can be complete without addressing the interrelationship between the two. The historic mutual distrust that exists between Tokyo and Beijing has significant impact on the United States and its role in Asia. Japan is currently the backbone of the United States security strategy in Asia, providing the United States with forward operating bases, host nation and economic support in exchange for security and stability. The danger will come if China perceives a significant increase in the security responsibilities of the Japanese Self-Defense Force.

While the scenarios above demand the United States attention and may draw the United States into a more active regional military role, there are two additional scenarios that may cause immediate and direct United States military intervention.

5. Taiwan, the other China, has gradually shifted from the autocratic regime of Chiang Kai-Shek to the more democratic rule of today. Consequently, there is

increasing interest in some sectors of the populace for a declaration of independence. Although the pro-independence movement recently suffered a setback with the Nationalist Party's victory over the independence minded Democratic Progressive Party the issue of independence still remains a pivotal area of confrontation. Complicating the issue, besides the obvious cultural ties, is that Taiwan and the People's Republic of China have grown economically interrelated. In spite of the economic links, the Peoples Republic of China believes Taiwan is part of its sacred Chinese territory thereby reserving the right to contest any declaration of independence. Though it is less likely that the Peoples Republic of China would invade Taiwan, a blockade by the modernized Peoples Liberation Army is within reason. Such a blockade would require the United States, which under United States law is obligated by the Taiwan Relations Act, 39 to insure Taiwan maintains a self-defense capability, to make the choice of whether or not to assist Taiwan directly. The dilemma; failure to act on Taiwan's behalf would almost certainly result in the loss of United States prestige and significantly discredit the United States with its other regional allies; aggressive action on the other hand, could lead to war.

6. The final scenario centers on the South China Sea and Chinese maritime expansion in general. Beijing claims almost the entire South China Sea and much of the East China Sea as Chinese territory, including islands currently claimed by several other countries among them Japan, Vietnam, Malaysia and the Philippines. China's has based her territorial expansion on historic treaties and has established

an economic exclusion zone around each island group (Spratly, Paracel and Senkaku Islands). China's increasing military presence in the South China Sea, particularly the construction of airfields and bases in the Spratly and Paracel islands, has sent alarm throughout the region. The control of these island chains is significant for several reasons, the potential resources in the South China Sea, the flanking of Taiwan and possible control of the strategic SLOC that crisscross the region. These SLOCs which carry over 15% of the world's international trade represent the economic and resource lifelines for the Asian-Pacific nations, the United States and much of the world. This freedom of navigation issue will have significant impact on United States strategists and how they view maritime forward presence.

The United States Strategy: An Exercise In Shaping

The Pacific region, because of its geography and vast size, has always been and will continue to be primarily characterized as a maritime theater of operations for the United States military. With the possible exception of Korea few military experts would envision a large-scale land war in Asia and certainly no one would expect the United States to invade the Asian mainland. Additionally, the Pacific Theater has historically been considered an "economy of force theater." This may change as we enter the twenty-first century. The world is witnessing a major shift in the centers of potential conflict from west to east. On the one hand, the expansion of NATO and the unification of Europe have provided relative stability in the context of United States vital interests in the west. On the other hand, the

growing United States economic interdependence on Asia, the developing military capability in China, especially when linked with the aggressive, expansionist policies emerging from the Peoples Republic of China, poses a major challenge to America's vital interests. China and her role in regional stability can not be minimized, trivialized or ignored.

Since the end of the Cold War the United States has developed a number of grand strategies to accomplish its objectives. Starting with President Bush's "Peacetime Engagement" 44 strategy which aimed at fostering a new world order. Passing through President Clinton's initial strategy of "Collective Engagement" 45 that relied primarily on multinational arraignments thereby curtailing unilateral action. Finally ending up with a "Strategic Engagement".46 A strategy that many argue is based primarily on the market place. Though this has worked in the short term to the benefit of both the United States and China, with the emergence of regional trading blocks, political associations (i.e., EU, ASEAN), and near-peer competitors, long term success is questionable. An overarching balanced strategy that recognizes China's global position and potential, maintains the initiative, retains flexibility of action and involves all elements of national power is required. The idea is to engage China and not revert to the containment tactics of the Cold War. In the interdependent polycentric world of the twenty-first century it would be cost prohibitive to contain China.47

The foundation of any successful strategy will be anchored in the interests and objectives of our Nation. These principles are articulated in the National

Security Strategy (NSS) and have not nor will they change significantly over time. At the macro-level, the NSS articulates three core objectives: enhanced security, economic prosperity, and the promotion of democracy abroad. Specifically, the NSS sees the accomplishment of these broad strategic objectives through the active engagement of the United States to shape the global environment in a way that facilitates the accomplishments of our strategic objectives.⁴⁸

In any umbrella national security strategy there must be a set of supporting strategies to help guide the elements of national power. These supporting strategies will then become the means to achieving our strategic objectives.

Although the focus of this paper is the uses of military power to shape the environment surrounding China a quick discussion of the strategic themes for the other elements of national power should set the stage.

Diplomatic and political power in the United States is often dependent upon or held hostage by support of the legislature. This system of checks and balances frequently makes it difficult to act definitively. That said, the executive and legislative branches of government will be faced with several challenges over the next quarter century. Chief among them is the issue of Taiwan. The United States must insure the Taiwanese people maintain the right of self-determination. The United States must neither remove necessary support or blindly support Taiwan as an anti-Communist country. The issue of Taiwan is the democratic principle of self-determination not the containment of communism. It is commonly accepted that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is not the monolithic communism

emblematic of the Soviet Union. Accordingly, despite President Carter's recognition in 1979⁴⁹ many in the United States still view the CCP in terms of their ideological underpinnings. The United States should deal with the CCP as a legitimate governmental party despite its totalitarian system and not a pariah ideology.⁵⁰ In effect, take the long view. Allow the natural movement toward more democratic principles that result from the Chinese governments opening of China politically, economically and culturally to the world.

The other major policy area is the freedom of navigation within the region. In this maritime theater flows the lifelines to many of our allies. Any disruption of these lifelines would quickly become of vital concern to the United States.

Accordingly, the United States should view the issue of the disputed China Sea island chains not in terms of the islands themselves but of the sea lines of communications that flow around them. Allowing access to resources and markets. One possible way would be to encourage the de-militarization of the disputed areas thereby reducing the threat of interruption to shipping.

Another important theme is the understanding of the Chinese strategic culture. American strategic culture is characterized by individualism, the demand for immediate results, is direct in nature and constitutionally subordinates the military to civilian government. Conversely, the Chinese have a fixed authoritarian relationship between father and son or leader and follower, prefer the indirect approach, has a government dominated by the military and is persevering. The United States should develop policies that subordinate the occidental perspective

and interpretations that have dominated our policy and actions in an attempt to develop strategies that understand and account for the oriental view. This greater understanding and incorporation of the Chinese perspective will facilitate communication and reduce misunderstandings or mixed signals while accomplishing our national security objectives at lower costs.

Currently, it appears that economic power has become the engine that is driving the train of interaction in Asia. It is anticipated that this economic focus of effort will continue as Asia struggles to emerge from the financial crisis that has engulfed the region since 1997. The United States must continue to exploit the market of burgeoning China at the same time taking advantage of its affordable products. This basic economic concept must remain de-linked from human rights, political reform and other internal problems of China. The United States must work with China and the international community to incorporate modernizing China into key economic organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and the Group of Seven (G-7) under viable commercial terms.

The United States military strategy is codified in the National Military

Strategy and proposes as its keystone tenets, shape the environment, respond to
crisis, and prepare for the future.⁵¹ Understanding this, the United States
developed a post cold war Asian military strategy designed to ensure American
interests are served and objectives accomplished. Secretary of Defense William

Cohen describes that strategy in his January 1998 trip to Asia. He said: "Our

forward deployed posture supports our strategy of engagement in the Asia-Pacific region that we pursue through our bilateral alliances and security relationships, our participation in interlocking multilateral security fora, and our strategic engagement of China."52

This strategy clearly recognizes the critical role that engagement, complemented by forward-deployed and forward-based forces, plays in the Asia-Pacific region. This is especially critical with the probable reunification of Korea and the almost certain clamor to bring the troops home that will follow. It is essential to regional stability that the United States assure the nations of the region that it is not withdrawing from Asia and thereby creating a shift in the balance of power.

In Asia, as in Europe, the United States has economic and security interests that demand an active role. America's economic security is becoming increasingly knotted to Asia and consequently our security strategy must ensure regional stability. This regional stability can only come in the context of continued United States forward deployments and basing.⁵³ Any reduction, actual or perceived, of United States military presence in the region would be viewed by the nations of Asia as a reduction in United States credibility and commitment.⁵⁴ This would create a power vacuum that could lead to an uncontrollable arms race and possibly to the outbreak of hostilities. Japan's re-militarization, in response to a United States withdrawal, could be the catalyst for China to accelerate her already rapid military expansion programs. A nasty and vicious conventional and possibly

nuclear arms race would ensue, much like the early cold war arms race that so dominated the United States and Soviet Union and destabilized the world. Finally, with this loss of regional stature would come the exponential loss to the United States of its ability to shape or influence events in the region.

Forward-deployed and forward-based forces provide the United States with operational forces in times of crisis. The sheer size of the region and distance from the United States, dictate critical time/distance factors. Forward presence and forward-based units reduce closure times by as much as two weeks from CONUS based forces. Coupled with the current trend in host nation support and burdensharing agreements, that actually make it cheaper for the United States to station forces forward than in CONUS, forward basing is fiscally attractive as well as operationally sound though it may not be politically feasible. Finally, if the United States reduces its forces in the region, based on a perception that no threat to regional stability exist, our ability to reintroduce forces into the area may be diminished and terribly expensive.

The changing landscape of Asia requires the continuous re-evaluation and renegotiation of our multinational, regional and bi-lateral security agreements and
relationships. This must include ballistic missiles conventions, nuclear proliferation
treaties as well as conventional security agreements. Chief amongst them is future
access to forward basing sites and/or facilities. Such new facilities may include a
reintroduction of United States forces back into the Philippines or possibly, if
satisfied with the full accounting of missing personnel, Cam Ranh Bay. Lastly,

China must be encouraged to become a party to and abide by, through a formal inspection and monitoring process, the existing international ballistic missile treaties.

Recently initiated military to military contacts must continue and expand opening the door to discussion, dialogue and understanding. Security Assistance programs focused on education will help develop an understanding and build confidence in each other. Perhaps China can be incorporated into a program similar to the Partnership for Peace program developed to integrate and familiarize the nations of the former Soviet Union to the West.

Finally, the role of multi-national and regional organizations, like the United Nations, ASEAN, and ASEAN Regional Forum can not be ignored. They have an important role in our ability to shape the environment in the region. The diversity and multilateral perceptions that they bring to the region will open communications and increase transparency, allowing the United States to develop a more comprehensive strategy.

Conclusion

What will China look like in the early twenty-first century? The uncertainty that surrounds this question is why it is so important for United States policymakers and strategic planners to move cautiously when they discuss Asia. Despite the major economic, political, industrial and military modernization programs underway the future intent of China is still largely unknown. No one can be sure who will succeed Jiang Zemin, much less what azimuth his successor will

take China after his five-year term expires. Will China's future leader be a pragmatic moderate political figure, a hard-line military coup, or will China's political future bring a secession of the free market industrial centers or the total collapse of internal discipline resulting in a civil war?

China's dynamic military expansion program, if continued at its current pace, will pose serious challenges to the balance of power in the region. Coupled with a strategy that calls for their steady expansion and engagement, first within the region and then the world, China is raising significant security concerns throughout the region and within the United States. Such challenges demand flexibility, creativity and prudence by United States policy makers.

The United States has outlined its enduring national interests and strategic objectives. Few places in the world have a greater potential for these objectives to come into conflict than in the Pacific, specifically Southeast or Northeast Asia. At the heart of this region is China. The Asian-Pacific region not only will remain vital to United States security and well-being it will continue to grow in importance in the future. Currently the United States, as the only remaining superpower, is the only country that is both in position and possesses the capability to shape the environment in Asia. As we enter the twenty-first century and other power centers begin to emerge, either as individual countries, multinational organizations or regional blocks, our ability to influence what occurs in Asia will proportionally lessen. Accordingly, to ensure that our goals and objectives are met, on terms satisfactory to us, we must focus on Asia now. We must use our implicit and

explicit power in an attempt to influence and shape the environment in order for us to attain our objectives.

In this theater, more than any other, the perception of a viable and visible forward presence and constructive engagement across the spectrum of national power is necessary to maintain the balance of power and shape the Asian environment over the long term. Strategic planners and policy makers must focus on recognizing the legitimacy and power of both China and the CCP. They must facilitate the integration of China into international associations and agreements. Policy makers must avoid a direct focus in internal Chinese affairs. Finally, we must continue to make clear our permanent interest in Asia requires a substantial forward presence.

Constructive engagement and forward presence is an effective, cost efficient strategy that goes a long way to ensuring regional stability, economic growth and maintaining United States influence to shape the region. It is the only practical way that we can influence China to become a cooperative regional and global power and not the next evil empire.

The future uncertainties and potential threat outlined in this paper, that China presents to Asia, the United States, and the world must be carefully considered by American strategist and planners. Asia plays too large a role in the security of the United States, and China plays too big a role in Asia, for the United States to retire from the Pacific and default to China the role of regional hegemon. Our continued active engagement in Asia allows us some control and influence over regional

events, thereby maintaining the balance of power. We cannot risk losing that influence by creating the impression that we are withdrawing from Asia.

China is awakening. How she acts when she is fully awake is dependent on what she sees. As national and military strategic planners look to the twenty-first century they must never lose sight of China's historical perception of her rightful standing in Asia; that of Suzerain.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ William J. Crowe, Jr. and Alan D. Romberg, "Rethinking Pacific Security," <u>Foreign Affairs</u>, (Spring 1991): 124.
- ² Caroline Blunder and Mark Elvin, <u>Cultural Atlas of China</u>, (Oxfordshire, England: Andromeda Oxford Press, 1998): overleaf.
- ³ Immanuel C.Y. Hsu, <u>The Rise of Modern China</u>, 5th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995): 3.
 - ⁴ Caroline Blunder and Mark Elvin, 214-15.
- ⁵ Gu Zhibin, <u>China Beyond Deng.</u> (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company Inc., 1991): 25.
- ⁶ Charles Heyman, ed., <u>Jane's World Armies</u>, issue 4, (Alexandria, VA: Jane's Information Group, December 1998) lays out several scenarios China has some significant and diverse internal security issues that they must face in the near term. Problems stem primarily from the rapid economic expansion and the decentralization that followed, growing unemployment, corruption, crime and drugs, religious and ethnic divisiveness to name a few.
- ⁷ Walter R. Mead, "An American Grand Strategy," <u>World Policy Journal</u> (Spring 1993):13.
- ⁸ China has announced a four-way modernization program covering economic, agriculture, science and technology and the military.
- ⁹ Random House Unabridged Dictionary rev. ed. (1975) defines Commercialism as referring to activities of business industry and trade. A preoccupation with the affairs of commerce as results in indifference to considerations other than wealth.
- ¹⁰ International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, Global Development Finance A World Bank Book, 1998, (Washington D.C.: The World Bank):160-61.

¹¹ Ibid., 19.

¹² Edward B Atkeson, "The People's Republic of China in Transition: An Assessment of the People's Liberation Army" <u>The Institute of Land Warfare</u>, No. 29 (February 1998):5. International Monetary Fund, <u>The International Financial</u>

- Statistics Yearbook 1998 (Washington D.C. 1998): 319 report PRC GDP for 1997 to be 7,607.7 (millions of \$ US) second only to the United States at 8,083.
- ¹³ Samuel S. Kim, "China's Quest For Security In The Post Cold War World," <u>Strategic Studies Institute</u> (26 July 1996): 30.
 - ¹⁴ Ross H. Munro, "Awakening Dragon," Policy Review (Fall 1992):13.
- ¹⁵ Rosita Dellios, <u>Modern Chinese Defense Strategy</u>, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 4.
- ¹⁶ Anthony Spellman, "US, French Fighter Sales to Taiwan Nudge Mainland China Closer to Russia," <u>Armed Forces Journal International</u> (January 1993): 16.
- ¹⁷ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), <u>Stockholm</u> <u>International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Yearbook 1997 Armaments, Disarmaments and International Security</u> (New York: Oxford University Press 1997), 302.
 - ¹⁸ Atkeson, 9.
- ¹⁹ You Ji and You Xu, "In Search of Blue Water Power: The PLA Navy's Maritime Strategy in the 1990's," <u>Canberra: Australian National University</u>, (December 1990): 5.
- ²⁰ Gregory R. Copley, <u>Defense and Foreign Affairs Handbook</u>, (Alexandria, VA: International Strategic Studies Association, 1999), 295.
- ²¹ Bai Chuan, "Chinese Navy's Development and Construction," <u>Foreign</u> <u>Broadcast Information Service-China (FIBS-CHI)--99-011</u> (Washington D.C.:1 Jan 1999), 3.
 - ²² Ibid., 4.
- ²³ Joris J. Lok. and Robert Karniol, "Spain Offers Carrier Design to Chinese," <u>Jane's Defense Weekly</u> 18 February 1995, 8.
- ²⁴ Gary Kentworth, "Latest Soviet Carrier for Beijing Fleet?," <u>Asia-Pacific</u> Defense Reporter August- September 1992, 26.
- ²⁵ Testimony of LTG Patrick Hughes, DIA Director, before the Senate Select committee on Intelligence, *Current and Projected National Security Threats to the*

United States and Its Interests Abroad, (Washington DC: GPO, February 22, 1996) 242.

- ²⁷ John J. Schulz., "China as a Strategic Threat: Myths and Verities," <u>Strategic Review</u> (Winter 1998): 14.
- ²⁸ David Shambaugh, "China's Security Policy in the Post Cold War Era," <u>Survival</u> (Summer 1992): 104.
- ²⁹ Bao Zhongxing, "Guard Against Information Overload," <u>FBIS-CHI-96-145</u>, (Washington D.C.: 26 July 1996): 26-27. Additionally, Michael Pillsbury, ed., <u>Chinese views of Future Warfare</u>, (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, March 1997) dedicates an entire section of his book to the Chinese view of the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA). This section includes several articles written by senior Chinese Military Officers that discuss information warfare.
- ³⁰ Si Liang, "China Makes Headway in Streamlining Troops," <u>FBIS-CHI-99-039</u>, (Washington D.C.:15 Jan 1999): 3.
- ³¹ Stephen P. Aubin, "China: Yes Worry About The Future," <u>Strategic Review</u> (Winter 1998): 19.
 - ³² Pillsbury, 319.
- ³³ Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, "China's National Defense", Beijing, July 27, 1998.
- ³⁴ Ibid., 5. The five principles are mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful co-existence.
- ³⁵ Five of the seven mutual defense treaties that the United States has is with nations in the Asia-Pacific region. The United States maintains defense treaties with Australia, Philippines, Thailand, South Korea and Japan.
- ³⁶ Bismark was the Prussian Leader during the mid to late 19th century whose goal it was to revive the Prussian empire and unify Germany. His strategy was to isolate the target state, use limited objectives and small wars to defeat the state thus avoiding the problems of large and powerful alliances forming against him. The

²⁶ SIPRI, 401.

five tenets to his strategy are isolate the enemy, defeat not conquer, tight civil/military relations, limited objectives, short wars.

³⁷ SunTzu's almost spiritual interpretation of warfare focuses on the indirect method of fighting, if fighting is required at all. This oriental approach to war is almost diametrically opposed to the occidental approach that emphasizes a direct approach focused at the enemy's center of gravity (strength).

- ³⁹ Taiwan Relations Act. Public Law 96-8, (effective 1 Jan 1979). This law is designed to maintain peace, security and stability in the Western Pacific and to promote the foreign policy of the U.S. by authorizing the continuation of commercial, cultural and other relations between the U.S. and Taiwan. In furtherance of this Act, the U.S. will make available to Taiwan such defense articles and defense services in such quantity as may be necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability.
- ⁴⁰ The Chinese Territorial Sea Law (February 1992) lays claims to sovereignty over reefs and islands, which are also claimed by other States and in the case of the South China Sea, are believed to lie in a region of considerable economic benefit. It in effect (because of the baseline used) lays claim to great expanses of open ocean potentially limiting freedom of navigation. Additionally, it requires foreign military vessels to request permission to transit. Finally, this law is viewed by many to be in violation of the United Nations Law of Sea Convention (approved by China in 1996). Economic exclusion zones use a baseline of 200 nautical miles and places greater restrictions regarding security, customs, finance and access on other States.
- ⁴¹ Barbara Opall-Rome, "Chinese moves Roil Region," <u>The Worldwide Weekly</u> <u>Defense News</u>, 8 February 1999, 1.
- ⁴² United States Pacific Command, <u>Asia-Pacific Economic Update</u>, (U.S. Pacific Command, Ha., April 1998), X.
- ⁴³ Joint Pub 1-02, <u>DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms</u>, (Washington D.C.: The Joint Staff,10 June 1998), 150. Describes Economy of Force theater as the theater in which risk is accepted to allow a concentration of sufficient force [and resources] in the theater of focus.
- ⁴⁴ The White House, <u>National Security Strategy of the United States</u> (Washington D.C.: January 1993),3.

³⁸ Aubin, 17.

- ⁴⁵ The White House, <u>A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement</u> (Washington D.C.: July 1994), 2.
- ⁴⁶ The White House, <u>A National Security Strategy for a New Century</u> (Washington D.C.: May 1997), 5.
- ⁴⁷ Fei-Ling Wang, "To Incorporate China: A New Policy For A New Era", <u>The Washington Quarterly</u> (Winter 1998): 76.
- ⁴⁸ The White House, <u>A National Security Strategy for a New Century</u> (Washington D.C.: May 1997), 3.
- ⁴⁹ The Carter communiqué of 1979 normalized relations with the PRC and replaced Taiwan in the United Nations.
 - ⁵⁰ Fei-Ling Wang, 76.
- ⁵¹ The Department of Defense, <u>National Military Strategy</u> (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 1997), 3.
- ⁵² U.S. Defense Secretary William Cohen speech before the Academy of Military Sciences in Beijing 19 January 1998.
 - ⁵³ William J. Crowe, and Alan D. Romberg, 130.
- The Author has interviewed several senior ranking military officers from regional nations to include Japan, Korea, Philippines, Taiwan, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and Australia. Additionally, both Japan and Korea in their respective National Defense Strategies (<u>Defense of Japan</u> 1997) and the South Korean (<u>Defense White Paper</u> 1997-1998) articulate the requirement for U.S. presence in the region to maintain stability. Pages 57-60 and 30-31 respectively.

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